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Shimkus named ‘Agribusiness Leader of the Year’ *St. Louis AgriBusiness Club recognizes Congressman with its highest honor*

ST. LOUIS – Citing his contribution to the promotion, development and improvement of the agricultural industry in the Metro East, the St. Louis AgriBusiness Club named Rep. John Shimkus (Illinois-19) as its AgriBusiness Leader of the Year.

“There is not a member of the United States Congress who has had a greater impact on the well-being of the agriculture industry in the Metro East than Representative Shimkus,” St. Louis AgriBusiness Club Past-President Molly Cline said. “Congressman Shimkus listens to the needs of the agriculture industry, and then he tells our story on the House floor, in the Energy and Commerce Committee upon which he serves, and throughout the halls of Washington. We are proud to recognize the Representative with our highest honor in appreciation of his service to the men and women of agriculture.”

Shimkus accepted the award during the Club’s January meeting at Baisch and Skinner Wholesale Floral Distributor in St. Louis.

“It is an honor to receive the St. Louis Agribusiness Leader of the Year award,” Shimkus said. “This organization is aptly named, as the effects of ‘agriculture’ reach into everyone’s lives via the food they eat, the fuel in their cars, plastics now made from corn or soybeans, and the thousands of transportation jobs related to agriculture in our region. I am proud to be a voice for renewable fuels, family farmers, and the industries that encompass agriculture. I also want to thank those who nominated me for this award.”

Throughout his seven terms in Congress, Shimkus has maintained a 94 percent voting record with the Illinois Farm Bureau due to his championship of the issues that directly impact the agriculture industry. Shimkus’ agricultural accomplishments include his support of the Renewable Fuels Reinvestment Tax, sponsorship of the 2011 Open Fuel Standard, the establishment of the 25x’25 Illinois Renewable Energy Alliance, and his unwavering support of the renewable energy and biofuels industries.

The NCERC Biofuels Research Center nominated Shimkus for the award in conjunction with the Illinois Corn Growers, Illinois Renewable Fuels Association, and the Illinois Farm Bureau. NCERC Director John Caupert said the nomination reflects Shimkus’ efforts on behalf of the nearly two-thirds of the St. Louis AgriBusiness Club membership who live and work in Illinois.

“Although the Congressman formally represents the state of Illinois in Washington, the impacts of his efforts have ripple effects far beyond the Metro-St. Louis region,” Caupert said.

“Congressman Shimkus has repeatedly demonstrated his commitment to protecting our region’s agricultural heritage and its future. He fights fearlessly to ensure our nation’s energy security by utilizing our abundant agriculture resources to create food, feed, fuel and jobs for America.”

Past recipients of the Club’s Agribusiness Leader of the Year award include Rick Tolman, National Corn Growers Association CEO (2010); Molly Cline, Senior Director of Industry Affairs at Monsanto (2009); and John Becherer, United Soybean Board CEO (2008).

Founded in 1981, the St. Louis Agribusiness Club provides educational, networking, and professional development for more than 300 members while promoting a positive image for this key industry. The Club works to attract agricultural companies and associations to the St. Louis area and plays an important role in helping government leaders better understand the importance of agriculture to our nation. Agribusiness accounts for 12% of the St. Louis region’s total area economic output and 20% of the region’s workforce.

Photo caption: St. Louis AgriBusiness Club Past-President Molly Cline (left) and NCERC Biofuels Research Center Director John Caupert (right) present Congressman John Shimkus with the AgriBusiness Leader of the Year award.

